

# Re: Phonemes

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-06/msg00799.html>

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- *From:* "David Wright Sr." <[dwrightsr@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:dwrightsr@xxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Sat, 18 Jun 2005 12:07:10 +0000 (UTC)
- 

"John Atkinson" <[johnacko@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:johnacko@xxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in [news:3YTse.21632\\$F7.1453@news-server.bigpond.net.au](mailto:news:3YTse.21632$F7.1453@news-server.bigpond.net.au):

>  
> "Ruud Harmsen" <[realemailseesite13@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:realemailseesite13@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in message  
> [news:6v96b11cqakifa33nauj1gid3vif4k75na@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:6v96b11cqakifa33nauj1gid3vif4k75na@xxxxxxxxxx)  
>> Fri, 17 Jun 2005 18:42:55 GMT: "Peter T. Daniels"  
>> <[grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>: in sci.lang:  
>>  
>> >David Wright Sr. wrote:  
>> >>  
>> >> What language has the largest known number of phonemes and how many  
>> >> does it have?  
>> >>  
>> >> Has any work ever been done to determine a theoretical maximum?

(snip)

> You can see that a language which combined clicks with Caucasian-type  
> secondary articulations would end up with maybe a thousand or two  
> different phonemes. Even this would be far below the "theoretical  
> maximum".  
>  
> John.

Thank you. I remember very little of my training in phonology, so I understood very little, but I appreciate it.

Do you think that all of those variations would be sufficiently different to a hearer under normal speech conditions that they really would be able to serve as phonemes? I am not saying that they couldn't. I am just interested in knowing.

Again Thanks

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The Heinlein Society is full of people who really believe, and really understand what he is trying to accomplish philosophically. They are a serious-minded group of individuals who are out to change the world for

the better. – Virginia Heinlein

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